

2nd Term, Academic Year 2026-2027

Sociology: Core Contemporary Debates

Tuesdays 11:00-13:00, Seminar room 2

Instructors: Léa Pessin, Herman van de Werfhorst

Contact: Olena.Shcherbatiuk@eui.eu

Open to: all researchers, visiting students, MW fellows and other research fellows at EUI. All participants must attend all meetings and do all assignments (no audits).

Course Description and Objectives

This is a course in a 3-course curriculum “SOCIOLOGY”. The other courses are the field seminar “SOCIOLOGY: Main questions and building blocks” and the elective “SOCIOLOGY: Key concepts, designs and mechanisms”. Taking the field seminar first is recommended but not a condition for participation. The present course zooms in on selected core contemporary debates in sociology, and asks where the research agenda came from, what is currently at stake, and where the field may move in the near future. Starting from recent high-profile studies in the sociological literature, we dissect which puzzle or tension is presented, how it is presented, and how it follows on long-standing debates in the literature. We then, collectively, develop ideas on what the next frontier could be in the chosen debates. The weekly two-hour sessions are hands-on: Students discuss the place of a study in the literature, make links with other subfields, and present applications proposed in assignments. Example debates could be about migrant assimilation, whether institutions matter for individual life outcomes among high-income countries, whether the gender wage gap is really a parenthood gap, or how contemporary complex families structure primary relationships.

Requirements for credit: Attendance: This course requires regular attendance and active participation, including presentation. Weekly assignments, done in teams (which are assigned and change in composition from week to week).

Readings

Researchers are expected to do the readings ahead of the meeting and to hand in a one-page assignment every week.

Artificial Intelligence

Creative use of Artificial Intelligence in assignments is encouraged. All use of Artificial Intelligence in the course must be disclosed and abide by EUI’s Guidelines for the Responsible Use of AI for Research, in particular section V Pedagogy and Training.